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Tact versus Talent—in the Classroom.

Tact has been defined as “that peculiar skill or adroitness in doing or saying exactly that which is required by or is suited to, the circumstances.”

Talent, on the other hand, is defined as “a mental endowment of a superior kind.”

Talent is power, tact is skill; talent is weight, tact is momentum. Talent is serious, sober, grave and respectable. Tact is all that and more too. It is not a sixth sense, but it is the life of all the five. It is the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the keen smell and the lively touch. Tact is useful in all places and at all times.

Talent knows *what* to do, tact knows *how* to do it. For all practical purposes of life, tact carries it against talent, ten to one. It has a knack of slipping into place with a glibness of movement as a billiard ball slips itself into the pocket.

Tact seems to know everything, without learning. The difference between tact and talent is the same as that between prudence and wisdom. — — —

Now, if tact is so necessary in every walk of life, this subtle quality is most essential to the teaching profession.

The essence of *pedagogical tact*, according to Dr. Rein consists in this, “that the teacher should understand to quickly grasp the whole situation at all times and under all circumstances and then and there apply a suitable remedy.”

Sometimes this admits of no delay; at other times prudent deliberation and wise counsel are required. Rules cannot be given, particular instances require special adjustment.

Nevertheless, some general suggestions relative to pedagogical tact may not be amiss.

In the first place, pedagogical tact would indicate that our intercourse with teachers whether special or regular class-teachers with whom we come in contact be polite, cordial and pleasant; and that our relations with our superiors be most respectful.

As special teachers, prudence dictates that we must foster the good will and coöperation of the regular class-teachers because such amicable relations are of inestimable benefit to our cause. We need not go out of our way to achieve this by flattery or undue attentions but under no circumstances should we antagonize any.

We should pass no remarks, ever so vague, that would discredit the regular class-teacher in the eyes of his or her pupils; nor should we make comparisons between this or any other class or school.

Socrates was no doubt a born teacher. His motto seems to be quite applicable to-day: "Know thyself;" and Christ, the greatest teacher of all times supplemented this saying of Socrates when He added: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

Every single school-day we must examine ourselves and see where we stand and how we propose to instruct those under our care. We must place ourselves before ourselves and see as others see us.

One often hears this comment from a principal: "O, yes, Miss N. or Mr. N. is such a lady, such a gentleman. This teacher's influence over the children is wonderful." Or again: "No, there is never any friction between this teacher and the pupils and her bearing is so ladylike and congenial."

And what do we find in the class-rooms of these favorite instructors? The teacher's deportment is firm yet condescending, patient yet energetic, and the work is methodical, well-prepared and the *syllabus is being followed*. The pupils are interested and make progress. There is never any question as to the continuance or the elimination of the elective. — It is a pleasure to visit such schools. *The teacher possesses the necessary Pedagogical Tact.*

We all know that the conditions are by no means favorable everywhere. We all have experienced the heart-aches and discouragements that seem to be the inheritance of our humble position and yet exalted calling. Brush them away, forget them if you can, but remember that these feelings are not confined to the modern language teachers.

Teaching is a science and an art. Humanity is progressive and so is our work. Are we keeping up with the progress of the world? The American boy or girl is not much different from any other born in another clime.

„Menschen sind die Menschenkinder
Aller Zeiten, aller Zonen,
Ob sie unter Tannengipfeln
Oder unter Palmen wohnen.“

"Nemo dat, quod non habet." The old Latin adage is ever pertinent.

We must keep up with the latest and most approved methods of modern language teaching. We must come prepared, know beforehand what we want to teach *that day, that very hour*. Make our instruction tangible, i. e. practicable. Go step by step; repeat constantly, and be ready to meet any and every emergency, and above all things use *Common Sense*, for this is after all the quintessence of Pedagogical Tact.

New York.

John Hülshof.